

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph number [0007] with the following amended paragraph:

[0007] The surrounding panel assembly may include a side panel slidably provided along a side, and may be configured to extend forward to reach into the area formerly occupied by the seat after the seat is retracted.

Please replace paragraph number [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

[0017] FIG[[S]]. 5A is a partial schematic view of the utility vehicle shown in the configuration shown in FIG. 2A, showing the rear seat in a deployed configuration;

Please replace paragraph number [0018] with the following amended paragraph:

[0018] FIG[[S]]. 5B is a partial schematic view of the utility vehicle in the configuration shown in FIG. 2B, showing the rear seat in a stowed configuration, in which a bottom of the rear seat is positioned adjacent a bottom plate of the cargo bed;

Please replace paragraph number [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a pick-up style utility vehicle 1 according to one embodiment of the present invention. The vehicle typically has a body coupled to four rotatable wheels, and one or more rows of seats, each row having one or places for a person to sit. Vehicle

1 typically includes a front seat 3, which is typically a bench seat configured to accommodate up to two persons, one side of which is used as a driver's seat and the other side of which may be used as a passenger's seat. Vehicle 1 typically further includes a rear seat 4, which is also typically a bench seat configured to accommodate two passengers. Thus vehicle 1 typically may accommodate up to four persons in total. Of course, the above embodiment is merely illustrative, and it will be appreciated that various other seat configurations may be provided. For example, each of the front and rear rows of seats may include pairs of individual seats, rather than bench seats, or each of the rows of seats may only be designed to accommodate one passenger. Behind the rear seat 4, there is provided a cargo bed 2. Cargo bed 2 is typically rectangular in shape, and includes a surrounding panel assembly formed around its perimeter, the surrounding panel assembly including a front panel and side panels. Alternatively, the cargo bed may be of another suitable polygonal or curved shape for holding cargo. A divider 5 is attached to the foremost end of the cargo bed 2 to separate the rear seat 4 from the cargo bed 2. Typically, the divider 5 is a meshed screen shield[[5]]. Alternatively, the divider 5 may be a non-meshed panel or other suitable dividing structure.

Please replace paragraph number [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

[0023] A cabin frame 6 is provided over the seats, and defines a cabin space for the driver and passengers. The cabin frame 6 includes a pair of side bars 61 provided on the right and left sides of the vehicle body to define side face of the vehicle 1. Typically the side bars arc from the front to the rear of the vehicle to define a passageway through which passengers may enter and exit seats 3, 4. A front portion of each side bar typically attaches to the vehicle body at a respective

mounting location adjacent a right or left side of a hood 8 of the vehicle, and extends rearwardly and upwardly to a roof. The roof is typically substantially flat, and defined by a middle portion of each of the side bars and a plurality of transverse bars 62 stretching between the side bars. The roof is typically formed to provide sufficient head room for any passengers seated in seats 3, 4. A rear portion of each of the side bars extends downward from the roof and attaches to the vehicle body adjacent the rear seat 4. Arm bars 30 may also be provided adjacent a right and left side of seat 3, and typically mount ~~[[the]]~~a seat back to a seat base of seat 3. Alternatively, ~~[[the]]~~a cabin may be formed in another shape suitable to hold passengers.

Please replace paragraph number [0024] with the following amended paragraph:

[0024] As shown in broken lines in **FIGS. 2A and 2B**, rear seat 4 is coupled to the body of the vehicle in a manner that enables the rear seat to be movable between a stowed configuration, shown in Fig. 2B, and a deployed configuration shown in Fig. 2A. The rear seat 4 typically includes a bottom portion 42 upon which one or more passengers may sit, and a backrest portion 41 configured to support each passenger's back. The bottom portion 42 is typically supported in the deployed configuration by ~~[[the]]~~a bottom plate 20 of the cargo bed. A lower end of the backrest portion 41 is typically pivotably mounted by a pivot 43 to a rear end of bottom portion 42, such that the backrest portion may be folded forward by a user to lie in a substantially flat intermediate position, shown in dashed lines in Fig. 2A. Further, a front end of the bottom portion 42 is hinged to the vehicle body so as to be rotatable around a pivot 44. Typically, the bottom portion 42 is connected to the pivot 44 through an arm 45 extending downwardly from the front end of the bottom portion 42, so that a bottom surface of the bottom portion 42 is

moved to a location forward of the pivot 44 when retracted. Thus, the rear seat 4 can be moved from the intermediate position to [[a]]the stowed configuration, shown in FIG. 2B, in which the entire rear seat 4 is retracted into a leg space 7 of the vehicle. The leg space is typically defined as [[the]]a space in front of and/or below the rear seat 4 in the deployed configuration, where a passenger might rest his or her legs while riding in the vehicle.

Please replace paragraph number [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

[0025] In this embodiment, cargo bed 2 is configured to be extendable forward into a space at least partially occupied by the rear seat 4 when the rear seat was in the deployed configuration, as described in more detail hereinafter. The ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 may be manually removed from the cargo bed 2 and reattached to a foremost end of an extendable portion 21 of the cargo bed 2, to enable the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 to be repositioned from a position adjacent the forward end of the cargo bed in [[the]]a retracted configuration to a position adjacent the forward end of the cargo bed in [[the]]an extended configuration.

Please replace paragraph number [0026] with the following amended paragraph:

[0026] Thus, a user who desires to carry a large load rather than passengers in the rear seat 4, may move the rear seat from the deployed to the stowed configuration, thereby freeing the space formerly occupied by the rear seat in the deployed configuration. This may be accomplished by folding down the backrest portion 41 to the intermediate position, and pivoting the bottom portion 42 with the folded backrest portion 41 into the stowed configuration in leg space 7. Once

the rear seat 4 is in the stowed configuration, the user may remove the screen-shield/divider 5 from the cargo bed 2, and extend ~~[[an]]the~~ extendable portion 21 of the cargo bed 2 from ~~[[a]]the~~ retracted configuration to ~~[[an]]the~~ extended configuration, into the space freed by moving the rear seat 4. The user typically may accomplish this by extending the sides of the cargo bed, by pivoting or sliding the extendable portion 21, as discussed below. Once the cargo bed is in the extended configuration, the user may reattach the screen-shield/divider 5 adjacent a forward end of the cargo bed 2 in the extended configuration, thereby providing extended cargo space for the large load.

Please replace paragraph number [0027] with the following amended paragraph:

[0027] According to another embodiment of the present invention, shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B, utility vehicle 1 may include a relatively large cargo bed 2b which is slidably attached to the vehicle body, such that the cargo bed may be moved between a first configuration, also referred to as an overhang configuration, shown in Fig. 3A, ~~[[]]~~in which a rear end of the cargo bed overhangs the rear wheels of the vehicle to a greater extent, and a second configuration, also referred to as a compact configuration, shown in Fig. 3B, in which the rear end of the cargo bed overhangs the rear wheels of the vehicle to a lesser ~~extend~~extent than the first configuration, and in which the forward end of the cargo bed is positioned in ~~[[a]]the~~ space formerly occupied by the rear seat in the deployed configuration. The bottom plate 20 of the cargo bed 2b typically includes an upper bottom plate 20a and a lower bottom plate 20b, which are slidable relative to each other along a longitudinal direction of the vehicle, to thereby enable the cargo bed to move between the first and second configurations.

Please replace paragraph number [0028] with the following amended paragraph:

[0028] A portion of the lower bottom plate 20b is positioned beneath the ~~[[seat]]~~bottom portion 42 of the rear seat 4 to stably hold the ~~[[seat]]~~bottom portion 42 thereon when the entire rear seat 4 is not retracted. Typically, this embodiment is manufactured using substantially the same chassis as the embodiment shown in Figs. 2A and 2B, and only the structure of the cargo bed differs between the embodiments.

Please replace paragraph number [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] With this configuration, even when the rear seat 4 is occupied by one or more passengers, the cargo bed 2b can carry a large load. However, in this embodiment, since an upper part of the cargo bed 2b, excluding lower bottom plate 20b, ~~[[,]]~~protrudes to the rear of vehicle 1 well over a pivot 22 around which the entire cargo bed 2b can be tilted for unloading when unlocked, a load in a rear portion of the cargo bed 2b creates a moment around the pivot 22. Therefore, as shown in FIG. 3B, the upper part of the cargo bed 2b is formed to be manually slid forward with respect to the lower bottom plate 20b until a front portion of the upper part of the cargo bed 2b reaches a location formerly occupied by the ~~stowed~~deployed rear seat 4. In this embodiment, while cargo bed 2b is not typically configured to be adjustable in size, a relatively large cargo bed may be provided, which may be moved into ~~[[an]]~~the overhang configuration to accommodate passengers, or into ~~[[a]]~~ the compact configuration when the rear seat is stowed.

Please replace paragraph number [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

[0030] Returning to the embodiment discussed with respect to FIGS. 2A and 2B, it will be appreciated that the rear seat 4 may be utilized as ~~[[a]]the~~ front panel for the cargo bed 2. As shown in detail in FIG. 4A, the rear seat 4 may be pivotably mounted to the vehicle's body. As shown in FIG. 4B, the rear seat 4 may be manually retracted to ~~[[a]]the~~ stowed configuration such that ~~[[a]]the~~ bottom surface 42a of the bottom portion 42 of the rear seat 4 covers a front opening of the cargo bed 2, and the rear seat 4 is locked to the position by an appropriate locking mechanism (not shown). In this example, the rear seat 4 serves as the front panel of the cargo bed 2 and, thus, typically no ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is installed. However, the ~~screen~~ shielddivider 5 may be attached to the extendable portion 21 of the cargo bed 2, if desired.

Please replace paragraph number [0031] with the following amended paragraph:

[0031] According to another embodiment of the present invention, shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B, rear seat 4 is configured to be movable to ~~[[a]]the stowed position~~configuration in which ~~[[a]]the~~ bottom surface 42a is substantially parallel and positioned upside down in front of bottom plate 20, such that a portion of the cargo bed 2 (such as extendable portions 21) may rest upon the bottom surface 42a of the rear seat 4. As shown in FIG. 5A, the rear seat 4 is hinged to the vehicle body utilizing a hinge 48 having two pivots 46, 47. As shown in FIG. 5B, the entire rear seat 4 can be manually retracted to an upside-down configuration into leg space 7, and the rear seat 4 may be locked to the position by an appropriate locking mechanism (not shown).

Therefore, the entire ~~[[seat]]~~bottom portion 42 is moved in front of the pivot 47 when in the

retracted configuration, so that the bottom surface 42a of the ~~[[seat]]~~bottom portion 42 and the foremost part of the bottom plate 20 of the cargo bed 2 form a substantially continuous plane.

Please replace paragraph number [0032] with the following amended paragraph:

[0032] The extension of the cargo bed 2 may be achieved as shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. Fig. 6 shows the extendable portions 21 serving as ~~[[a]]~~the front panel of cargo bed 2 when the extendable portions 21 are in ~~[[a]]~~the retracted configuration. Each of the extendable portions 21 is hinged at a proximate end by hinges 23 to a front end of a respective side panel 26. Each of the extendable portions 21 typically has a length of approximately a half of the width of the cargo bed 2. The extendable portions 21 may be moved from the retracted configuration in which they serve as the front panel, as illustrated with solid lines in FIG. 6, by pivoting the extendable portions 21 around the hinges 23 approximately 90 degrees to ~~[[an]]~~the extended configuration illustrated with two-dot-chain lines in FIG. 6.

Please replace paragraph number [0033] with the following amended paragraph:

[0033] As also shown in FIG. 6, an opening 24 (typically square) is formed so as to be opened upwardly at the front end of each of the side panels 26. The ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is typically substantially a rectangular shape and its upper part has a width corresponding to the distance between outer surfaces of the side panels 26. The lower part of the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is narrowed to correspond the distance between inner surfaces of the side panels 26. Typically, the upper part of the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is meshed and the meshed portion is divided in two at the

middle thereof, to leave a solid rib therebetween to add strength to the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5. Bosses 50 are provided to the upper end of the narrowed section of the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 so as to protrude downwardly. The ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is attached to the front ends of the side panels 26 so that the bosses 50 are inserted into the openings 24 formed in the side panels 26 when the extendable portions 21 are retracted to be the front panel of the cargo bed 2. The extendable portions 21 also have upwardly-opened openings 25 of the same shape and size as the openings 24 of the side panels 26, at opposing ends.

Please replace paragraph number [0034] with the following amended paragraph:

[0034] Accordingly, when user wants to extend the cargo space, the user pulls out the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 from the openings 24 of the side panels 26. Then, the user rotates each of the extendable portions 21 from the solid-lined retracted positionconfiguration to the two-dot-chain-lined extended positionconfiguration, each rotating approximately 90 degrees. The user then reattaches the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 to the openings 25 of the extendable portions 21. Here, the narrowed lower section of the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 is configured to reach down to the upper surface of the bottom plate 20 so that it also serves as the front panel of the cargo bed 2 when the extendable portions 21 are extended.

Please replace paragraph number [0035] with the following amended paragraph:

[0035] The extension of the cargo bed 2 may also be achieved as shown in FIG. 7. In this example, the extendable portions 21 are provided so as to slide relative to the side panels 26 of

the cargo bed 2 in a longitudinal direction of the vehicle. The extendable portions 21 may be provided to the bottom plate 20 or the side panels 26 through an appropriate sliding means such as a combination of rollers and rails. In this example, the extendable portions 21 typically do not serve as the front panel of the cargo bed 2 since they are forwardly extendable to ~~[[an]]the~~ extended configuration (as shown with two-dot-chain lines in FIG. 7) from ~~[[a]]the~~ retracted configuration (as shown with solid lines in FIG. 7). Instead, in this example, the narrowed lower section of the screen shield 5 serves as the front panel of the cargo bed 2 when the extendable portions 21 are extended as described above. To achieve this, the extendable portions 21 have the upwardly-opened openings 25 at foremost ends to accommodate the bosses 50 of the screen ~~shield~~divider 5. In this example, the ~~screen-shield~~divider 5 may be fixed to the extendable portions 21 and moved with the extendable portions 21, since a distance between the openings 25 does not change during the slide movement of the extendable portions 21.

Please replace paragraph number [0036] with the following amended paragraph:

[0036] In the above embodiments, it has been described that backrest portion of the bench-type rear seat is foldable to provide the space for the cargo bed, however, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that only a section thereof may be foldable and moveable between the deployed and retracted ~~positions~~configurations, or the rear seat may have a plurality of independently stowable and deployable sections. -In addition, while a two-seat type vehicle has been illustrated, it will be appreciated that the present invention is also applicable to utility vehicles with only one seat, in which the seat's backrest portion on a passenger's side is independently foldable relative to the driver's side. Further, while bench seats have been

illustrated, it will be appreciated that the present invention is applicable to utility vehicles of a non-bench-seat type in which the passenger's seat is foldable and the entire passenger's seat is independently formed from the driver's seat. Further, as described above, it will also be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the present invention is also applicable to utility vehicles with three or more rows of seats.